



Growing Up in Scotland study

Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) is the longitudinal research study following the lives of 8,000 children from infancy through to their teens. Launched in 2005, there are two groups or 'cohorts' of children taking part, now aged between 4 and 6.

Families are representative of Scotland as a whole and are being visited annually to take part in an interview collecting information on a range of topics such as family circumstances and changes; child health and development; diet and physical activity; use of childcare; experiences of pre-school and school; access to support from family and friends. The information collected provides important new evidence that will help develop policies and services affecting young children and their families in Scotland. GUS findings were used to inform the development of the Early Years Framework.

All research findings from the study are available through the GUS website:
www.growingupinscotland.org.uk

The findings from the third year of the study were published in 5 separate topic reports:

Non-resident Parents

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/21085002/0>

Food and Activity

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/21085143/0>

Parenting and the Neighbourhood Context

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/13143448/0>

Multiple childcare provision and its effect on child outcomes

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/13143410/0>

The impact of children's early activities on cognitive development

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/16101519/0>

Please turn over to read some of the key findings.

If you would like to sign up to receive regular updates about new developments and findings from GUS, please visit our website www.growingupinscotland.org.uk



Scottish Centre for
Social Research

MRC

Social and
Public Health
Sciences Unit



GUS is funded by the Scottish Government and is carried out by The Scottish Centre for Social Research in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at the University of Edinburgh and the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit at Glasgow University.

Non-resident parents

- Around one-fifth of children aged 3 and one-quarter of children aged 5 do not live with their father.
- Two-thirds of children with a non-resident parent have contact with that parent, but one third do not.
- Most families negotiate and agree contact arrangements informally, with just 5% of cases going through the courts.

Food and activity

- Most children aged 5 (84%) eat 2 or more types of fruit each day while 52% eat 2 or more types of vegetable.
- The socio-economic divide persists, with children living in low income households and in the most deprived areas less likely to eat a range of fruit and vegetables and more likely to consume unhealthy snacks.
- 41% of children in the most deprived areas had eaten a takeaway meal in the past week, compared to 23% of children in more affluent areas.
- Children who are less physically active are more likely to consume unhealthy foods.
- Children who had been breastfed had a healthier diet than those who had not been breastfed.

Parenting and neighbourhoods

- Most parents (81%) are satisfied with the area where they live.
- Deprived areas were generally seen as less child-friendly and rural areas as more child-friendly, despite having less access to some services.
- The majority of families (88%) live within 10 minutes walk from a park or playground but one fifth of parents said that improving facilities for young children should be the top priority in their area.
- Parents who reported more satisfactory friends and family networks engaged in more activities with their child, and were more open to seeking help and support.

Childcare

- Three-quarters of parents with children aged just under 3 and 82% of those with children aged just under 5 use childcare.
- Many families use more than one childcare provider, 59% of families using childcare for a child aged just under 4 used more than one childcare provider.
- The most common form of multiple childcare arrangement is the child's grandparent(s) plus some other form of care, usually nursery.
- Parents using multiple childcare providers are no less satisfied with their arrangements than parents using just one provider.
- Using more than one type of childcare was not found to have an effect on children's cognitive development at age 3.

The impact of children's early activities on cognitive development

- Children who experience a wide range of activities like being read to, singing nursery rhymes and painting, from an early age score higher in cognitive ability tests at age 3 than those with less experience of activities.
- Children from less advantaged households were less likely to experience a wide range of activities than children from more advantaged households.
- Experiencing a wide range of activities from an early age does have an impact on cognitive development and can moderate - though by no means eradicate - the effects of socio-demographic disadvantage.

For more information please visit www.growingupinScotland.org.uk or contact Lesley Kelly, GUS Dissemination Officer on 0131 651 5004 or lesley.kelly@ed.ac.uk